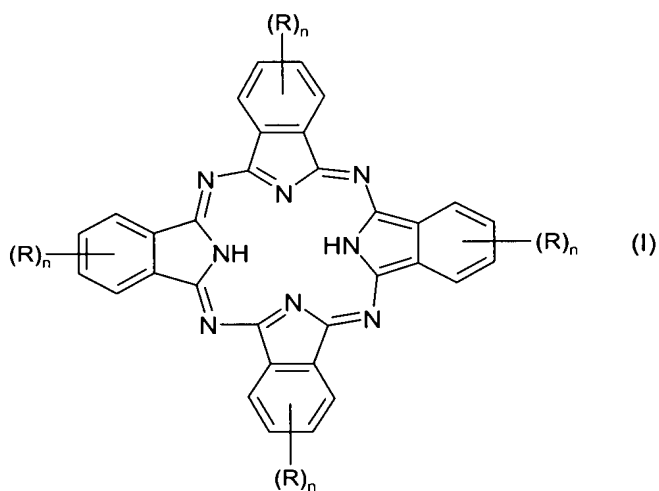


IN THE CLAIMS

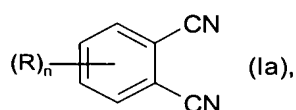
Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of a metal-free phthalocyanine of [[the]] formula I



the process comprising,

converting by conversion of an ortho-phthalodinitrile of the formula Ia



to the metal-free phthalocyanine of formula I in an inert solvent with a boiling point of at least 120°C (at standard pressure) in the presence of ammonia and an alkali metal hydroxide,

wherein in which, in formula I or Ia, the variable n can adopt values of 1, 2, 3 or 4, and

wherein in formula I or Ia, the R radicals denote a five- or six-membered saturated nitrogen-comprising heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen, optionally substituted by one or two C₁-C₈-alkyl groups, which

wherein the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen is bonded

via a ring nitrogen atom to the benzene ring,
wherein the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen can,
optionally, comprise ~~and which can still comprise~~ one or two additional nitrogen atoms or an
additional oxygen or sulfur atom, and
wherein the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen can be,
optionally, substituted by one or two C₁-C₈-alkyl groups ~~which comprises carrying out the conversion~~
~~in the presence of an alkali metal hydroxide or alkali metal carbonate.~~

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein the inert solvent is
~~chosen~~ selected from the group consisting of ethylene glycol, diethylene glycol, propylene glycol,
1,2-butanediol, 1,3-butanediol, 1,4-butanediol, 2,3-butanediol, ~~the mono- and di-~~(C₁-C₄-alkyl) ethers
of the abovementioned diols, di-(C₁-C₄-alkyl) ethers of the abovementioned diols, 2-[di(C₁-C₄-
alkyl)amino]ethanol and 3-[di(C₁-C₄-alkyl)amino]propanol.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein the inert solvent is
selected from the group consisting of 3-dimethylaminopropanol [[or]] and n-butyl glycol ~~is used as~~
~~inert solvent.~~

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein the alkali metal
hydroxide is selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, and
combinations thereof ~~sodium carbonate or potassium carbonate are used as alkali metal hydroxide or~~
~~alkali metal carbonate.~~

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein n in the formulae I
and Ia adopts the value 1.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein the R radicals denote a six-membered saturated ~~nitrogen-comprising~~ heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen, wherein the six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen is substituted by one or two C₁-C₄-alkyl groups, and wherein, optionally, the six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen can comprise an additional nitrogen atom which is bonded via a ring nitrogen atom to the benzene ring and which can still comprise an additional nitrogen atom.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The process according to ~~claim 7~~ claim 6, wherein the R radicals denote a piperidine or piperazine ring substituted by one or two C₁-C₄-alkyl groups, wherein the piperidine or piperazine ring is bonded to the benzene ring via which is bonded via the ring nitrogen atom or one of the two a ring nitrogen atom atoms of the piperidine or piperazine ring to the benzene ring.

Claim 8 (New): The process of claim 1, further comprising an alkali metal carbonate.

Claim 9 (New): The process of claim 8, wherein the alkali metal carbonate is selected from the group consisting of sodium carbonate, potassium carbonate, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 10 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the converting is conducted at a temperature of from 140 °C to 170 °C.

Claim 11 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen is substituted by one or two C₁-C₈-alkyl groups.

Claim 12 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the five-or six-membered saturated

heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen is a five-membered saturated heterocyclic ring.

Claim 13 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen is a six-membered saturated cyclic heterocyclic ring.

Claim 14 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen further comprises one additional nitrogen atom.

Claim 15 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the five-or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen further comprises two additional nitrogen atoms.

Claim 16 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the five-or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen further comprises an oxygen atom.

Claim 17 (New): The process of claim 1, wherein the five-or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen further comprises a sulfur atom.